Chapter 18
The Philosophy of Using Communicative Intelligence for Cross-Cultural Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

This chapter describes Communicative Intelligence (CI) from a philosophical lens. The author explains its cognitive, emotional and actionable elements. CI is the deliberate and intentional deployment of verbal and nonverbal communication patterns in ways that aspire to develop relationships across and within cultures in the unpredictably dynamic arena of human interactions (see Zoller, 2008). Further, the author suggests that CI is a consciously mindful state where the deliberate application of verbal and nonverbal skills and moves are used to achieve an alignment between the intended message and the manner in which it is perceived to build rapport, model empathy, and impact trust. By using the strategies and ways of thinking found in CI, leaders can improve the quality of their relationships resulting in new possibilities and solutions to the issues facing organizations. Key areas of interest will be discussed including how CI can be used to impact cross-cultural collaboration and leadership.

INTRODUCTION

“Though the peoples and nations of the earth speak a multitude of tongues, they share in common the universal language of the hands” (Quintilianus, 1977)

This chapter focuses on several key philosophical ideas related to Communicative Intelligence (CI) and cross-cultural collaboration. First, the author presents a definition and framework of Communicative Intelligence (CI). This is followed by ways that cross-cultural collaboration can be achieved using CI. Finally, the author presents strategies that leaders can use to lead more effectively. Although there is minimal literature to draw from concerning CI, there is some literature that supports the framework of CI (e.g., Poyatos, 2002; Costa & Garmston, 2002) including an international video analysis on nonverbal patterns of teachers from the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) (Zoller, 1998). The videos of classroom lessons were analyzed to identify, de-
fine, and compare the nonverbal patterns found in teachers from five countries: the Czech Republic, Japan, the Netherlands, Australia, and the United States. Common and unique nonverbal patterns were found among the teachers. One significant finding that emerged from the study, however, was the identification of common nonverbal patterns such as voice tone, gesturing, eye contact, and standing still. These patterns were common in all five countries, yet their range of implementation, intensity of deployment, and frequency of use varied in each country. This chapter suggests that CI is a critical mechanism used to communicate across cultures while maintaining personal authenticity and integrity in the intent and delivery.

How do we achieve cross-cultural collaboration in organizations? What does it look like? How does it sound? What does it feel like? Cross-cultural collaboration implies connection and relationship. Having a social identity and sense of belonging are two elements of collaboration that connect people (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Another element of significance is culture - not simply one culture; rather, how we can collaborate across and amongst cultures. Hall (1976) suggested culture is defined by how the collective of individuals communicate. Hall further suggested that cultures could be categorized as high-context and low-context. According to Hall, high-context cultures use language that is more dependent on inference whereas low-context cultures use language that is more explicit and rely less on inference. Hall’s work is important to mention because CI will be explained as a way to navigate across cultures to increase collaboration.

To provide greater focus on the scope of this chapter, a definition of cross-cultural collaboration is useful. If we accept Hall’s definition as well as that of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), culture is comprised of attributes and products of a society that are transmissible beyond heredity (e.g., music and literature). The cross-cultural context refers to how these cultures interact with each other once relationships are established. Collaboration in this context is the co-laboring of work. Thus, cross-cultural collaboration “involves people [from different cultures] with different resources working together for a common goal” (Costa & Garmston 2002, p. 12). Given this definition, it is also important to acknowledge there are multiple explanations in the literature related to ways diverse cultures interact, including in-group and out-group cultures. In-group cultures are collectivistic and out-group cultures are individualistic (Niedergassel & Kanzler, 2011). As posited by Niedergassel and Kanzler (2011) these two group-orientations impact how groups collaborate and share information.

When participants practice CI, an environment is created where cross-cultural collaborations embrace ambiguity, unfamiliarity, and disequilibrium while suspending judgment in a process of deliberate intention and authentic feedback (Poyatos, 2002). Establishing such an environment is important because each culture has unique characteristics. For instance, when language enters the picture, not only is there a difference in the register (i.e. formal and informal language) there are also variations in iconic gestures and the influences of gesture on understanding (Kendon, 1997; McNeill, 1992, 1998, 2000; Poyatos, 2002).

COMMUNICATIVE INTELLIGENCE (CI)

The author first defines CI to understand how best to create cross-cultural collaboration. This is followed by an explanation of the parts of CI to provide the detail needed to grasp the model and superimpose it on the readers’ experiences as they reflect on their level of CI. By reflecting on personal experiences with collaboration, the reader can feel how CI fits as a viable model of human intelligence and realize that CI is not limited to collaboration. Next is the description of Zoller and Landry’s (2010) framework of communication skills to use with intention in cross-cultural